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Unmasking the CIA

SOC 4012 The Secret Team

More and More, Control Is Being Assumed By Men Whose Very Identities Are Secret

THE SECRET TEAM, the CIA and Its Allies in Control of the United States and the world, by L. Fletcher Prouty; Prentice Hall, \$8.95.

Reviewed by EVAN ROBERTS

In a biting indictment of the Central Intelligence Agency's unauthorized grab for power throughout the world, Col. Prouty rips the mask from much of the secrecy that has always surrounded the covert activities of this super-powerful national agency.

The author writes with authority and inside knowledge of the CIA. A retired Air Force officer, he was the official Focal Point officer for first the Air Force and later the Department of Defense, for contacts with the CIA pertaining to all matters dealing with the military support of Special Operations. (Clandestine Operations.) Not being a CIA man he was exempt from taking the oath of secrecy.

HE BELIEVES that the most remarkable development in the management of America's relations with other countries since the end of World War II has been the assumption of more and more control over military and diplomatic operations at home and abroad by men whose activities are secret, whose budget is secret, and whose very identities as often as not are secret — a "Secret Team."

Prouty's bitterest barbs are directed at Gen. Maxwell Taylor, author of The Uncertain Trumpet, who broke with the Eisenhower military doctrine, turning his back on conventional military theory to become a leader of a program of response, of reaction, and of undercover activity all tossed under the umbrella of counterinsurgency, a popular word coined

the early days of the Kennedy administration.

REPORTER Mary McGrory has said: "President Kennedy, who at the time (Vietnam) was caught up in the counterinsurgency mania which had swept the New Frontier, agreed privately with Sen. Mike Mansfield on a need for complete withdrawal from Vietnam" but said "I can't do it until 1965 after I get re-elected."

The author relates that the CIA was the first in Vietnam with helicopters, it introduced the M-16 rifle there, and brought into Indochina the B-26 bombers left over from Cuba and Indonesia and the T-28 trainer aircraft modified as a ground attack plane.

FORMER President Harry S. Truman was among the first to become gravely concerned with plans to increase military and covert actions in North Vietnam shortly after Lyndon B. Johnson took office.

Truman declared in December 1963: "For some time I have been disturbed by the way the CIA has been diverted by its original assignment. It has become an operational and at times a policy-making arm of the government."

"I never had any thought that when I set up the CIA that it would be injected into peacetime cloak-and-dagger operations. Some of the complications and embarrassment that I think we have experienced are in part attributable to the fact that this quiet intelligence arm of the President has been so removed from its intended role that it is being interpreted as a symbol of disaster and mysterious foreign intrigue and a symbol for cold war enemy propaganda."

THE AUTHOR takes a decidedly dim view of the so-

called Pentagon Papers; he calls this "a gross and crafty misnomer" since all too few of these papers were bonafide military papers. He explains that they may have been written under Pentagon headings, signed by "military" officers or "military department" civilians but that for the most part they represent the work of a small group of civilians, some of whom worked in the Pentagon, and their military (real and cover) counterparts.

And he adds that Daniel Ellsberg, who released the Pentagon Papers to the newspapers, was a former CIA employee who certainly knew that they were truly not Pentagon papers. Prouty contends that the papers laud the CIA's intelligence role but pass over the highly criticized covert operations and disparage other government agencies, especially the Pentagon.

ONE OF THE most fascinating chapters of this intriguing book deals with the many baffling aspects of that Kennedy administration fiasco — the Bay of Pigs.

The author reveals that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were told to keep hands off the operation despite the fact that the CIA was operating down through all the services to the tactical level, taking supplies, arranging training, and utilizing all forms of transportation.

He faults President Kennedy for ignoring the National Security Council, thus leaving the door open for the CIA to step in and as a result never getting the kind of staff support on the Bay of Pigs he should have had.

THE INNER Kennedy clan came out of the Bay of Pigs disaster with the firm conviction that the CIA had done them in and that they had the future, Prouty concludes.

Five presidents have been responsible for and have learned to live with the CIA and all have suffered from this relationship. But Richard Nixon, the author says, spelled out best the power and the burden that this covert force places upon the mantle of government, when he said: "You can't have a driving dream (of peace) when you are in the midst of a nightmare."

Prouty says the solution lies in uncovering the CIA's activities, and that Congress must cut its money off.

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